

A

REFUTATION
OF THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PASSIVE OBEDIENCE
AND
NON-RESISTANCE.

Written by J. P. one of the Laity of Marlborough.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by S. Popping, at the Raven
in Pater-Noster-Row, 1710.

Price Two Pence.

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A.

REFUTATION
OF THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PASSIVE OBEDIENCE, &c.

Rom. 13. Ver. 2.

Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God; the Powers that be are Ordained of God: Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation.

IN the handling these Words, for the better understanding of them,
First, It will be necessary to consider in what Time, and upon what Occasion, this Epistle was written.

Some are of Opinion that it was in the former Part of *Nero's Reign*; which Part was very Mild. Others are of Opinion that it was in the latter Part of *Nero's Reign*; which Part was Tyrannical and Cruel. But however it is generally agreed upon, that it was in some time of *Nero's Reign*: It might well be concluded that it was written either in a time of Persecution, or when Persecution was expected: And the Occasion of writing this Epistle was chiefly to warn, and encourage the Christians to bear up under Persecutions.

Secondly, It may be considered to whom this Epistle was wrote, if we look into the 6th and 7th Verse of the 1st Chapter. There we shall find that it was to them that were the called of *Jesus Christ*, called to be Saints: That is, The Ministry of the Gospel: By Saints are not meant Persons that are Upright, and Righteous towards God, and Man; but Persons Ordained, set apart, sanctified to the Office of the Ministry of the Gospel: Those I say are meant by the called Saints. This Epistle, as well as the rest of the Epistles, were written only, or at least chiefly, to the Gospel Ministry, which I can very easily, and fully prove; but because it is needless now to do it, for brevities sake I shall omit it, and proceed to handle the Words of the Text. And,

First, I shall consider, who is meant by the Higher Powers. We may observe, it is spoken in the Plural Number, *Powers*, and therefore cannot be confin'd to any single Person whatsoever, nor to any particular Sort of Government, nor any particular Degree of the Governors in the Civil State; which is the Ordinance of God; God hath ordained Government, but what Sort of Government ought to be is *MAN'S* Right to ordain, whether

ther it be Monarchical, or States, or Commonwealth, or any other Sort of Government ; as you may find if you compare the 16th Chapter of Deuteronomy, the 18th Verse, and so on, with the 17th Chapter, and 14th Verse, and so on. *Judges and Officers shalt thou make thee in all thy Gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and they shall Judge the People with just Judgment ; and when thou art come unto that Land, and shalt say, I will set a King over me, &c.* Agreeable to this is that of the Apostle Peter, in his first Epistle, Chap. 2. Ver. 13. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of MAN, whether it be to the King as Supreme, &c.*

Neither are the Words higher Powers, or Power, to be confin'd to the Chief Magistrate, but extended unto all Inferior Magistrates of whatsoever Quality they may be in the Civil State : I say, all Magistrates of whatsoever Degree in the Civil State are the Higher Powers meant in the Text ; for Subjection to whom the Exhortation or Command is given.

Secondly, I shall consider, who is meant by every Soul : And First, I shall take it with Restriction, every, and all, so taken in many Places, particularly (to Name no more upon the present Occasion) that of St. Paul, in the 4th to the Phil. ver. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth (or encourageth) me :* That is all Things that I have just now mentioned, and that is necessary by me to be done. I say, I shall take it as confin'd to the Saints in the Primitive Times, as above explain'd. Now the Reason of the Exhortation to these especially, may be as followeth :

First, Those Saints were Spiritual Kings, and Governors in the Kingdom of Heaven, or (which is the same thing) the Kingdom of the Gospel of Christ, in Luk. 12. 32. *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom : And in Luk. 22. 22. I appoint unto you a Kingdom.* Now, as by our Saviour, the Apostles had the Promise of this Spiritual Kingdom ; so after his Decease, and Resurrection, they, and their Successors (which were the Saints) inherited this Kingdom ; as it appears from the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, chap. 1. ver. 8. *Ye have reigned as Kings without us, and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you,* and so in the first Epistle of Peter, chap. 2. ver. 9. *Ye are a Royal Priesthood ;* the Apostle here writing to the Saints as afore explained. And again, in the *Revelations*, chap. 1. ver. 6. *Hath made us Kings and Priests unto God ;* the Divine speaking in the behalf of himself, and the rest of the Ministry.

Secondly, These Spiritual Men were Christ's Freemen, as may at large be easily proved ; but because I would be as brief as may be, I shall here pass it by.

Now, upon the account of their being thus qualified, they may perhaps be likely to conclude, that they should be thereby Free from all Subjection to all Civil Magistrates : The Apostle exhorts them as being Free, not to use their Liberty, but to be Ensamples to the Flock : Upon the same Account the Apostle may see it needful to give them the Exhortation in the Text ; *That they should*

be

be Subject to the higher Powers. Much less were they to Exercise any Authority in Civil Affairs ; the Spiritual Powers ought to be Subject to the Civil Powers ; the Civil Powers have the Pre-heminency ; they are the Higher Powers, the Spiritual are the Lower Powers, the which, if well considered, one may thiuk, should work Humility in the present Prelacy, as well as the inferior Ecclesiastical Ministry. In St. Matthew, chap. 20. 25, 26, and 27 Verses, Jesus said, *Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, but it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister ; and whosoever will be Chief among you, let him be your Servant.*

Now, considering the Exhortation in the Text, as confin'd to the Spiritual Ministry ; supposing them to be under the Reign of Tyrannical, Persecuting Rulers, in it may be included the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-resistance* as to them ; they were not to resist upon any Account whatsoever : Accordingly you find it in Matthew, chap. 5. 38, 39, and 40 Verses, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, (that is, it is in the Moral Law, which Christ intended not to destroy) An Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth ; but I say unto YOU that YOU resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right Cheek, turn to him the other also ; and if any Man will Sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak also.* Agreeable to this is that of the Apostle Peter in the first Epistle, Chap. 2. *That, Christ when he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threaten'd not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth Righteously, leaving us*

us an Example, that we should follow his Steps. So the Author to the Hebrews, Chap. 12. ver. 1, 2. Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author, and Finisher, (that is, the Captain, or Leader, and Crowner, or Rewarder) of (our) Faith; who, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame. Now, these Spiritual Men especially, by their Function. were obnoxious to Persecution, both from Jews and Gentiles; from Jews, for crying down the Ceremonial Law, and preaching up the Strictness of the Moral Law, and Gospel in opposition to the Ceremonial Law; and from Gentiles, for exclaiming against their Idolatry and Superstition, and exalting the True and Living God, (but unto them unknown) and the Christian Religion. And this was their constant Practice; therefore the Apostle saith to Timothy, the 2d Epistle, chap. 3. ver. 12. All that will live Godly in Christ-Jesus shall suffer Persecution. By the Phrase, *Living Godly in Christ-Jesus*, is meant their continual Practice in the Ministry of the Gospel, which is in several Places called Godliness: In Christ-Jesus, that is, being Members of his Spiritual Body; substituted Powers and Officers in his room: I say this rendered them obnoxious to Persecution; and whensoever they were persecuted, they were Passively to be Obedient, and not to resist upon any account whatsoever; their Obedience was to be unlimited, they were not to withstand — For if they did resist they should receive to themselves Damnation: The meaning is, They should be Condemned or Accursed; that is, Excommunicated, or (which is the same thing) Suspended, they not being fit to be Inheritors of the Spiritual Kingdom any longer.

Thus

Thus I have made it appear, That the Apostle in his Epistle, or (as I may call it) his Pastoral Letter, exhorts the Saints to Subjection unto Civil Government : Nevertheless, this cannot oblige the Laity to Passive Obedience and Non-resistance upon any account whatsoever ; which brings me,

Secondly, To consider the Exhortation in the Text in a more larger Sense, that is, as including the common People, or Laity, that sate under the Christian Ministry. These, by reason of their Change of State from *Gentilisme* to *Christianity*, or from *Judaism* to *Christianity*, being under the aforesaid Spiritual Governors, may be ready to conclude, (as well as them) That being Christ's Freemen, therefore they were Free from the Yoke of all Civil Government whatsoever, tho' ne'r so good ; therefore needful was this Exhortation unto them ; they (as well as their Spiritual Superiors) should be put in mind, that *they be subject to Principalities and Powers, that they obey Magistrates* : However, these Lay-Men in their Station, being not Confessors, were not (like the Ministry) obnoxious to Persecution ; the Confessors only were liable to Persecution : The Laity gave the Civil Magistrate no occasion of putting them upon the trial of Passive Obedience. So then, these Things being considered, the Exhortation amounts but to thus much, That all manner of Persons, by what Names or Titles soever dignified or distinguished, should subject themselves to Civil Government. Now, further, to proceed ; supposing the Chief Magistrate, or Higher Power at *Rome*, to be bloody *Nero*, in the latter Part of his Reign, which was very wicked ; yet the other Higher Powers then in being, that is, the under Rulers ;

Rulers ; the Senate (parallel to Parliaments) were it seems not such wicked Men, as it doth well appear from History, relating, That the Senate did rise against their Tyrannical Prince ; fate in Judgment upon him ; and condemned him to Death, as being a common Enemy to Mankind.

Further, The Exhortation again is not to Subjection under wicked, but good Rulers, as plainly appears from the 3d Ver. of the 13th Chapter to the Romans, *For Rulers are not a Terror to good Works but to the evil.* Now, by the Rule of Contraries, Those that are a terroure to good Works, but not to the evil, cannot of Right be Rulers, but Usurpers of Authority : Agreeable to this are the Words of *Eutherius Bishop of Rome*, to *Lucius* the first Christian King of *England*, in the Year of our Lord 169. This King *Lucius* immediately after his embracing the Christian Faith, sent to the above-named Bishop to be advised by him how to Govern that great People over whom he was King. The good Bishop return'd him Answer, as followeth : ' Ye are God's Vicar upon Earth, you have the Book of the Old and New Testament with you, out of them, with the Advice of your Council, make you Laws to govern your People by, and govern them accordingly ; in so doing, you will do well : But if you Rule not according to these Laws, but do wickedly, you shall be no longer King ; nay, the Name of a King shall not remain with you.' For this, see *Fox's Acts and Monuments of the Church*, Book I. Pag. 107.

Further, to proceed, it followeth in the aforementioned 3d Verse, *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power, do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* It cannot be here meant of a wicked, but good Power; for it is evident to every Body, That wicked ones are not ready to Praise or Reward good Work, but on the contrary, evil Works.

Again, in the the 4th Verse, *For he is the Minister of God to thee for good:* This cannot possibly be meant of bad Kings; for they cannot be said to be the Ministers of God for good to any People; as you may see in the Case of *Jereboam* the Son of *Nebat*, (who was one of the five or six Kings that only can be properly said to be the Lord's Anointed) He is branded to Eternity with this Brand, *That he sin'd, and MADE Israel to sin.* And not only *Jereboam*, but about twenty Kings succeeding all a-row were in the like manner branded, *That they did like Jereboam the Son of Nebat, who sin'd, and made Israel to sin.* Thus we see, That instead of those Kings being Ministers of God for good, they were the Pest of Pests to the People over whom they reign'd; they *M A D E Israel to Sin*, of which we know the dismal, fatal Consequences.

It followeth further, in the 4th Verse, and so on; *But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain, for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth evil;* wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience-sake; for, for this cause pay you Tribute, for they

they are God's Ministers attending continually upon this very thing: *Render therefore to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour.* From all which it plainly appears, That the Apostle means none but good Rulers that he exhorts Persons to be Subject unto; but not wicked Rulers, which are Tyrants and Oppressors, and therefore no better than Usurpers of Authority, which ought to be withheld, that is, resisted: Resistance hath been practis'd in all Ages, as often as there hath been Occasion and Opportunity. I shall not trouble my self nor the Reader with any One of the many Instances that might be given out of merely human History, it being needless so to do; but (which is more valid) I shall give several Instances out of Holy Writ, which ought to be observed for our learning.

First, I shall Instance in *Rehoboam*, King of *Israel*: He was resisted by the Ten Tribes, because he did but threaten them with Slavery from an Arbitrary Power; against *Rehoboam* they set up *Jeroboam*, who was a Ruler under *Rehoboam*; they made *Jeroboam* their King; and fought against *Rehoboam* all his Days.

Secondly, I shall Instance in *Amaziah*, King of *Judah*, the 2d Book of *Chronicles*, chap. 15. ver. 27. Now after the time that *Amaziah* did turn away from following the Lord, they made a Conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to *Lacish*, but they SENT to *Lacish* after him, and slew him there. These Men that did thus to *Amaziah* certainly

certainly must be the Magistrates, who had Power so to do, (the Law of God against Idolaters must be executed) it was not the Mob ; but the same Persons that conspired against King *Amaziah*, and slew him, made his Son King in his stead ; and we read no more of the Matter : Though when *Joash* and *Ammon*, Kings of *Judah*, were slain, the Men that did it were put to Death ; it was because those Men (by whom these two Kings were slain) were Murderers ; for they were but private Persons ; and so they ought not to have killed their Prince ; what they did was very Illegal : Tho' their Magistrates had just Right to call their Princes to account for Idolatry, or Murder, and Tyranny, and in a legal Way to execute the Law of God upon them ; for, if the Chief Ruler be accountable to none but God, (which is false Doctrine taught by Boasters of High-Church) supposing him to be a Murderer, the Law of God cannot be executed ; which Law of God, I shall shew you from two Places of Scripture ; (tho' I might Instance in several other Places of Scripture.) The First Instance I shall give you is in *Genesis*, chap. 6. ver. 9. *Who so shedeth Man's blood, by MAN shall his Blood be shed.* God vouchsafeth to give an invincible Reason for this Law to make it valid, viz. *For in the Image of God made he Man.* It might be observ'd, that this Law of God was given when there were but four Men in the World, viz. *Noab*, the Prince of the World, and his three Sons : So that suppose *Noah* had murdered one of his Sons, his other two Sons were by this Law obliged to shed their Father's Blood. The Second Instance I shall give you, is in *Numbers*, chap. 35. 31st and 33d Ver. *Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a Murderer ; the Land*

Land cannot be cleansed of the Blood that is shed therein, but by the Blood of him that shed it : The Application is easie.

The 3d and last Instance I promised to give is in the Case of *Jeboash* King of *Israel*. *Febu* the Captain of his Host, slew *Jeboash* his Prince (for doing wickedly) with his own Hands, after he had Sworn Allegiance to him ; the King had reign'd above 11 Years before *Febu* slew him. *Febu* also slew 70 of the King's Brethren ; who (if Kingdoms by a Divine Right are Hereditary) were lawful Heirs to that Kingdom ; for which good Deeds the Lord God gave *Febu* a great Reward, in causing him to Reign, and his Sons, to the Fourth Generation, (which were not in any wise of the Family Royal) to Reign after him, tho' himself did, as also did his Sons after him, wickedly, like *Feroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, who fin'd, and made *Israel* to sin.

But, by some it may be objected, That *David* would not stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, tho' he had done to *David* a great deal of wrong. I answer, *David*, tho' Anointed to be King, his Reign was not to commence until the Death of *Saul*: He was in the mean time no Ruler, but a meer private Person ; and therefore had no right to order a Punishment on King *Saul*, much less of his own Will, to lay his own Hand on him : And tho', if *David* did not resist King *Saul*, yet (if that Kingdom was Hereditary) *David* did resist, and usurp the Kingdom from those that were the undoubted Lawful Heirs to King *Saul*, even from *Ishboseth* who had reigned two Years over *Israel*; and from *Mephiboseth*, the Son of *Jonathan*,

David's

David's Friend, who was the Son of King *Saul* ; and from *Micha* the Son of *Mephibosheth* : The House of *David* made long War with the House of *Saul* ; and at length, to consummate the Tragedy, making sure work on the Royal Family, in a dreadful manner, slew Seven of *Saul*'s Sons in one Day ; all of them (if Kingdoms by a Divine Right are Hereditary) were Lawful Heirs to the Kingdom of their Father King *Saul*.

Afterwards, *David* set on, and assisted his youngest Son *Solomon* in resisting his eldest Son *Adonijah*, and supplanting him of his Divinely Rightful Inheritance, if that Kingdom was Hereditary.

Thus I hope I have (tho' briefly yet) fully refuted the idle Doctrine of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-resistance*, from that very Portion of Scripture which is made use of as Fundamental to build the said idle Doctrine upon ; and which is knavishly, or ignorantly Interpreted by the High-flying *Jacobite* Clergy and Party. I have also by the way refuted the Doctrine of Kingdoms being by Divine Right Hereditary.

So I conclude, wishing Prosperity and true Happiness to all true Lovers of Liberty, and to all Protestant Princes, and Protestant Successors, in the Possession, and to the Inheritance of the Kingdom of *Great Britain*.

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